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Landscape Biographies

*Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Perspectives
on the Production and Transmission of Landscapes*

Edited by

Jan Kolen, Johannes Renes and Rita Hermans

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15 Fatal Attraction

Nazi Landscapes, Modernism, and Holocaust Memory

Rob van der Laarse

Abstract

Landscapes are in western culture considered as 'art', valued by scenic qualities represented in landscape painting and reproduced in landscape architecture. Working under the fetish of authenticity by singling out aesthetic styles and iconic periods, connoisseurship is still a basic assumption of authorized heritage narratives. Although recent biographical approaches of historical landscapes have opposed this reductionism, the prevailing metaphor of an archaeological layering of time prevents a thorough understanding of the landscape/mindscape nexus. Building on Marvin Samuels's long-neglected notion of authorship, this chapter offers a more dynamic perspective by drawing attention to the complex relationship of past motives and present meanings that are too often forgotten and neglected. This is illustrated by the remarkable contrast between our attitude to Nazi Germany's 'traditionalist' landscape art and to its 'modernist' spatial planning and landscaping. Thus, while Hitler's taste is banned from the public sphere and Himmler's Auschwitz has become Europe's iconic heart of darkness, Nazi highways, the VW Beetle car, and 'Nordic' landscapes have lost nothing of their original attraction. Yet the way we domesticate 'foreign' pasts and cultures by transforming them into 'our' common heritage has made us blind for some uneasy continuities of the Third Reich's *Ordnungswahn*, and its 'nationalization of nature' that confronts us with the uncomfortable possibility that Nazism still 'speaks' to present generations.

Keywords: landscape biography, heritage of war, spatial cleansing, modernism, authorship, Nazism, Holocaust, terrortscapes, heritagescapes

Landscape and heritage form a strong couple in European culture. Since the Renaissance landscapes have been perceived as 'art' and valued by scenic qualities, represented in painting and reproduced through design and architecture. This connoisseurship is still a basic assumption of heritage conservation and tourism, working under the fetish of authenticity by singling

out aesthetic styles and iconic periods. Although recent biographical approaches to historical landscapes have opposed this reductionism by stressing long-term development, the landscape/mindscape nexus can – in my view – not be grasped by the prevailing metaphor of an archaeological layering of time. Alternatively, a more dynamic perspective is offered by Marwyn Samuels's long-neglected notion of authored landscapes that points to past motives and present meanings (Samuels, 1979, and compare Kolen, 2005). Authorship reminds us that cultural landscapes are not simply there, but are made and remade by different 'authors' as functional and ideological spaces in specific forms for specific reasons. Yet this dynamic concept of agency or authorship should also make us aware of the use and abuse of landscapes for ideological reasons; naturalizing power relations by erasing 'wrong' histories after revolutions and military occupations (Mitchell, 2002, x-xi).

Thus I will argue that we cannot understand the often contested meanings of landscapes without knowing the historical contexts and symbolic meanings of their making as well as destruction, e.g. the sites of trauma or terrortscapes. Modern landscapes in particular cannot be trusted at their face value because of a certain degree of 'heritagescaping' (Garden, 2006; Van der Laarse, 2008). This will be illustrated by the remarkable contrast between our attitude to Nazi art, banned from museums as bad taste, and the general acceptance of 'Nazi nature', which left its mark on post-war landscapes in Germany as well as in many occupied territories.

In other words, the wartime cleansing and colonization of Germany's occupied territories in the East from 1939 to 1945 were related to a large-scale fabrication of brand new *Heimatscapes* in the interest of the German economy and German *Lebensraum*. It is this radical utopia of *Machbarkeit* (Makeability) and what Niels Gutschow (2001) named *Ordnungswahn* (Order Mania), which in my view is the Third Reich's modern legacy. Paradoxically, in the context of genocide, mass migration and national reconstruction, these Nazi heritagescapes seem to many people today no less authentic than the pre-existing environments of the disappeared dwellers of the pre-war era. A rethinking of this eco-totalitarian approach to heritage might therefore raise a profound distrust of our own pleasures of the imagination.

Unwanted Memory

Safely stored deep in the subterranean vaults of the US Army Centre for Military History, a small collection of watercolour paintings of historical towns and landscapes from 1910 to 1915 is preserved in a filing cabinet.

Thus far, the paintings have never been exposed to the public and are only referred to as *The Watercolors*. What explains this remarkable silencing of an age-old genre that only three generations ago was still so immensely popular among European and American artists, travellers and art collectors? Of course, landscape painting and picturesque travel have always had a hidden agenda of power, space and identity (Bermingham, 1986; Darby, 2000; Mitchell, 2002, 5-34). However, without doubt, the illusion of innocence and nostalgia had been lost in the trenches of the First World War. This bloody break with the bourgeois order was responsible both for Europe's first modern memory boom and the birth of modernist art, as symbolized by fallen soldiers' remembrances (Mosse, 1990; Winter, 2006) as well as by the nihilist rites of the Dadaist and Futurist avant-garde (Ekstein, 1989), and the Russian and German political revolutions. It was in this unequalled turmoil of loss and renewal that some men were challenged to reinvent themselves as mass politicians, such as in the case of the unsuccessful painter and defeated soldier who signed these watercolours with 'A. Hitler'.

Although produced without any political intention before the war, *The Watercolors* are currently the world's most protected works of art, and just like Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1924-1925) still banned from the public sphere (Kocken, 2003; Goldschmith, 2007). Yet this hidden Washington war collection once belonged to Hitler's public image-builder, the photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. As one of the *Führer's* 'court photographers' he recorded his public and private life in no less than 2.5 million negatives. Hoffmann used them for all sorts of glossies and propaganda publications, such as *Ein Volk ehrt seinen Führer* and his famous Berchtesgaden series of Hitler's clique at the Alp villa Berghof. Hoffmann was the owner of the photographic shop where Hitler's mistress Eva Braun stood behind the counter. When the *Führer* awarded him with the title of professor at the Great German Art Exhibition of 1938, his expanding 'publishing house for Nazi photography' already employed some 300 people. Hitler's photographer received the watercolours as a gift from his patron and was still so much attached to them that immediately after the war he submitted a restitution claim against the American government.

Though restitution claims are commonly associated with formerly Jewish property looted by the Nazis, the spoils of genocide were in fact soon followed by those of victory. After the Nazi plunder, souvenir hunting in Germany by allied soldiers was a common practice in 1944 and 1945, as might also be illustrated by John Pistone's robbery of *Hitler's Photo Album* from the Berghof (CBS News, 2009) – a destiny comparable to Hitler's library, which is kept safe behind the walls of the Washington Library of Congress

(Ryback, 2008). It shows how loot and plunder were as much common practice among the Allies as among the Nazis, and so were post-war restitution claims of German civilians at the allied courts. In fact they exceeded by far those of Jewish survivors and American-Jewish restitution organizations directly after the War (Meng, 2011, 29-59). But like Hitler's Library also *The Watercolors* were never returned to their former owner. After Hoffmann's death in 1957 his claim was continued by his daughter (who later sold her rights to her commissioner, a Texan collector of Hitler memorabilia); it was finally dismissed by the American Supreme Court in 2004.

There is of course no objective reason why objects like these should never return home. But heritage is as much about disowning and destruction as about collecting and preservation. We clean up the past by downgrading unwanted heritage – and what is more unwanted than things associated with Hitler's authorship? In the modern art world Hitler's art works are still so strictly tabooed that the English artists Jake and Dinos Chapman purchased some years ago for £115,000 a complete series of Hitler paintings, including thirteen watercolours which they managed to resell for £685,000 after garnishing them with psychedelic rainbows, stars and hearts. They kept the oil paintings, though, to display them at the much talked-about exposition *If Hitler Had Been a Hippy How Happy Would We Be* (2008) in the London White Cube Gallery. Instead of brightening them up in flower-power fashion, Hitler's realistic portraits in 17th-century Dutch painting style were set about by the Chapman brothers with a knife and transformed into carnival horror pieces. I remember being simultaneously irritated and fascinated by this act of iconoclasm. For why should one artist mutilate the work of another as a new work of art in a museum of all places? Although the same artists were strongly criticized some years before for a comparable 'dressing up' of 83 engravings of Goya's *Disastres de la Guerra* of 1810-1816 in *Gigantic Fun* (2001), their creative destruction was this time praised as an exposure of 'the truth' of Hitler's art (Akbar, 2008).

What explains such double standards? The answer seemed to be hidden in the basement of the London gallery, where the Chapman brothers exposed in 2008 as a sideshow their older installation *Fucking Hell*: maquettes of horrible concentration camps in showcases filled with generations of heaped up corpses in the dark, decaying decor of the Holocaust's bloodlands. At display in this *Warhammer* miniature world was not the old fashioned picturesque of the young Hitler's taste, but the world of the camps as a projection of his matured, nihilist mind; put otherwise, the purifying, horrible sublime of Nazism's Arcadian utopia, in which even the Führer himself was represented as a painter (Chapman & Chapman, 2008; Mosse, 1991).

Purity and Modernity

So, with Hell we may wonder about the diabolic relationship between fascism and modernity. Though framed as a barbaric hell by the Chapman brothers as well as in current Holocaust literature and movies, the Nazi utopia of a return to Nordic nature and Aryan purity should not be understood as anti-modernism. It was a form of 'totalitarian modernism' (Griffin, 2007, 219-223, 306-335, and compare Dubowitz *et al.*, 2010) or 'creative destruction' as coined in Werner Sombart's *Krieg und Kapitalismus* (1913), implying that capitalism leads to new wealth for some by destroying the wealth of others. For, hijacking Karl Marx's dialectical twin-concepts *Verelendung* and *Vernichtung*, this voluntaristic notion of historical necessity played a key role in Nazi spatial planning politics as conducted by a 'Führer-Artist' posing as the 'perfect Wagnerite' (Spotts, 2002; Michaud, 2004 [1996]). As an art of destruction the industrial modernity of the Holocaust (Baumann, 1989) seems therefore closely related to Hitler's wish for immortality through grand designs, leadership and image building, as copied by almost all leading Nazis and *Wehrmacht* officers 'working towards the Führer' (Kershaw, 1993).

Figure 15.1 Hitlers Volkswagen



Nazism was a missionary project of steeled artist-soldiers, fighting for a total mobilization of the nation for the sake of race, state and purity (Boterman, 1998). Thus Nazi landscape planning was much indebted to the modernist illusion of speed and scenery, such as expressed in Leni Riefenstahl's Agfacolor propaganda films, Walter Frentz's and Hugo Jäger's colour photos of Hitler's private life (Gaertringen, 2007; Atlas, 2009), and Heinrich Hoffmann's innovative 3D images of the 1936 Olympics in Munich (sold with special glasses) and his photo series of the *Führer's* tours through Nazi Germany in Hitler's luxurious eight cylinder type 770 Mercedes-Benz motorcar, bought from the royalties of *Mein Kampf* (1924-25). Yet not only industry, science, propaganda, film and architecture, but also landscape, city space and infrastructure played a fundamental role in Nazism's staging of modernity.

More than anything else the Third Reich's landscaped motorways or *Reichsautobahnen* became the symbol of Germany's modernity. Combining speed, mobilization and a patriot love of nature, they opened up new national landscapes for ordinary citizens. These landscapes were experienced as one huge *Heimat* museum, scanned through a car window from the high-speed road (Zeller, 2007; Seilder, 2000). The main icon of this *völkisch* consumption of landscape was Hitler's Volkswagen, of which the prototype was sketched on a beer mat by the prospective 'art dictator' at a Munich terrace in 1932. Four years later the *Kraft durch Freude – Wagen*, as designed by Ferdinand Porsche, was taken into production in Hitler's new industrial city *KdF-Stadt* (Wolfsburg) that was built in a short time by forced labour. Remarkably, though, unlike Hitler's *Watercolors*, this popular family car was never tabooed *after* the War. On the contrary, when the production began again in 1946 in the heavily bombed Wolfsburg factory in the British occupation zone, it was framed as a first sign of Germany's post-war reconstruction. World-famous by its pet name *Käfer* or Beetle, Hitler's *Volkswagen* is been held nowadays as one of Germany's most prominent *Erinnerungsorte*, symbolizing more than anything else the post-war *Wirtschaftswunder* (Schütz, 2001; Ebbinhaus & Roth, 1988). Thus instead of painful symbol of Nazism's modernity, Hitler's dream car has become a nostalgic symbol of modernity – and nobody has felt obliged to lock it up in the American Pentagon!

Now heritage will always be used and misused for politics of identity, and thus tells us as much about forgetting as about remembering. Nonetheless, a return of memory may also confront us with surprises. This might be illustrated by the public impact of the so-called *Höcker Album*, which in 2007 was acquired by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington from an anonymous donor and exposed immediately on the

Figure 15.2 Auschwitz Album



Internet. It is considered to be the photo album of the German commanding officer Karl-Friedrich Höcker, a former assistant of Auschwitz-Birkenau's camp commanders Richard Baer, Rudolf Höss and Franz Hössler, and besides them his album shows photos of other well-known Nazi leaders, such as the supervisor of the Birkenau's gas chamber Otto Moll, and Auschwitz's notorious camp doctor Joseph Mengele. Though consisting of only sixteen cardboard leaves with 116 pictures of Auschwitz's daily life in the summer and fall of 1944 by a Nazi war photographer in the SS compartments of the extermination camp, they completely subvert our brutal image of Hitler's willing executioners.

Hence most disturbing of this soldier's souvenir are not the usual demonstrations of male comradeship, but the pictures of these SS-officers and a group of *SS Helferinnen*, while singing popular songs with an accordionist at the *SS Hütte Soletal*, a holiday resort 30 km south of Auschwitz/Oświęcim at the banks of the Sola river. It is painful to know that these photos of jolly young people were shot on July 22, when the pressure of work in Birkenau rose to a high, and the new crematorium ovens of Topf & Söhne were operating at full capacity; for this was the period of the gassing of more than

400,000 Hungarian Jews. As this was a relatively tranquil day with just 150 new prisoners having arrived at Birkenau's railway platform, of which 117 were immediately sent to the gas chambers, and 21 men and 12 women set to work as convicts, it might well have been that Höss and the others were rewarded for their work performance with a day off at the SS recreation lodge (Lewis, 2007; Dwork & Van Pelt, 1996, 338-343; Pressac & Van Pelt, 1998; Braham, 1998; Wensch & Rincke, 2010). The superior civilized naturalness of these high-ranking Nazi officers, demonstrated in the pictures at Solahütte, might be seen as a perfect complement to the dehumanization of the Jewish 'inferiors', who had actually built the place as slave labourers – a fact unknown to most inhabitants of Polish Oświęcim (Auschwitz), and probably a reason for its quite remarkable, recent demolition (Citroen & Starzynska, 2011).

Until 1980 people were used to see the Nazi concentration camps through the eye of the American, English, Canadian and Russian liberators, shocked by the horrors of dead bodies and skinny inmates behind barbed wire in striped prison clothes. Thus our image of the Holocaust was mainly based on Allied war photography in international magazines like *Life* and *Vogue*, stories of survivors, the Nuremberg Trials, and early films like the US Nuremberg propaganda film *That Justice be Done* (1946) and the Soviet documentary *Nuremberg Trials* (1947), or Wanda Jakubowska's Polish Auschwitz film *Ostatni Etap* (1947), in which former prisoners figured in original camp uniforms (Van Vree, 2010; Van der Laarse, 2013).

Yet shortly after the 1978 Polish nomination of the Auschwitz-Birkenau National Museum (1947) for the UNESCO world heritage list, the US Hollywood mini TV-series *Holocaust* (1978), Pope John Paul II's visit to Auschwitz in 1979, and Yad Vashem's public disclosure of Lili Jacob's *Auschwitz Album* in 1980 had made Auschwitz (instead of Buchenwald, Dachau or Majdanek) the main symbol of a new Holocaust memory boom (Hellman & Klarsfeld, 1980; Gutman & Gutterman, 2002). The 56 pages with 193 photos of Lili Jacob's album (used already as proof against Höcker and the other commanding officers in the German Auschwitz Trial of 1963-1965) were after the SS evacuation of Auschwitz in January 1945 miraculously found in a deserted barrack in Camp Dora by a Hungarian-Jewish inmate who recognized herself with her own family in the pictures. By a strange coincidence these only existing photos of the dehumanizing and deathly selection process at the ramps of Birkenau, which would influence Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) and a whole range of Holocaust novels and movies, date from almost the same period (May/June 1944) Lili Jacobs arrived in Auschwitz. The photos were probably taken by the same SS photographer as

the *Höcker Album*, either Bernard Walter or Ernst Hofmann, and later found by her in Camp Dora after the Russian liberation of Auschwitz January 27 1945.

A US Army documentary from 1945 showed how American soldiers forced the inhabitants of the city of Weimar to walk the pastoral bypass to the nearby 'hell of Buchenwald'. This horrific display of heaps of corpses or 'cadavar memorials' that in Rudy Koshar's words 'amounted to a deep, albeit temporary, rupture in the memory landscape' (Koshar 2000, 209-10, and compare Knigge, 2002), were however not only meant to make the Germans aware of the Nazi crimes. For, to speak with Roman Karman's English version of the 1947 Soviet documentary *Nuremberg Trials*, it should also make clear that without the Allied victory the Nazis would have 'turned the whole world into a Majdanek' – a nightmare echoed six decades later in the Hell of the Chapman brothers. Probably many of the millions of Holocaust tourists of the last decades walked with this in mind through Auschwitz's iconic gate to experience Europe's deepest wound as a universal, traumatic heritage of mankind.

However, in complete opposition to the *Auschwitz Album*, the *Höcker Album* fundamentally questioned this iconic image of Auschwitz-Birkenau (Van der Laarse, 2009). Europe's unparalleled terror- and traumascape is portrayed here in precisely the well-ordered, pastoral way promoted by Himmler's Nazi planners, as if the whole terrifying spot was a sort of holiday camp. Like *The Watercolors*, the photographs confront us with a disturbing normality, although I find the *Höcker Album* a lot more troublesome than Hitler's picturesque paintings. Anyone who tries to understand the meaning of the Holocaust by looking at these pictures ends up with questions. For, if the camera is not lying, why do we not see a glimpse of the industry of death? Could it really be that these ultimate perpetrators were not even noticing their unparalleled crimes against humanity? Yet precisely when staring at the cheery, human faces of Hitler's hangmen, Höcker's pictures evoke a strong voyeuristic feeling of enmity, shame and curiosity. For how disturbing is the pastoral image of these war criminals in the black hole of the Holocaust relaxing in a nature resort? For ages civilized people searched for healing in nature, and if we are shocked by these pictures it is not because of what they show but of what they conceal: prisoners behind barbed wire, barracks, gas chambers, and crematoria. How could we ever comprehend the criminal behaviour of these people, looking so akin to ourselves, yet having fun in the heart of darkness?

The knowledge that the Holocaust camps were not created accidentally in the panic of war, but were carefully planned and designed as systematically

controlled no-go-areas, indicates how much they were actually 'the result of the exact, modern, "scientific" encompassing of persons with card indexes, card-sorting machines, charts, graphs, maps and diagrams' (Burleigh, 1988, 10). Although it might be hard to imagine that the Nazi system of 'legal terror' by means of forced labour (*Arbeit macht frei*) had its origin in the project of the Enlightenment as much as in Romanticism, it was combining a rational belief in planning and statistics with Hegel's Idea of Progress, Herder's essentialist notion of the nation state, Spengler's fear of the decline of the West, Lombroso's hygienic stigmatization of criminals, and Max Nordau's fight against the stigmata of degeneration (*Entartung*) (Wachsmann, 2004; Schwegman, 1998; Van der Laarse, 1999). Thus Nazism could be seen as fulfilling a racial, civilizing mission by new totalitarian means under a strongly authored *Führer* principle. In addition, we should consider the crucial role of European colonialism as a model for Nazi – as well as Stalinist – 'continental imperialism' (Ahrendt, 1951; Steinmetz, 2009). Practicing ethnic cleansing on indigenous 'people without space' (*Volk ohne Raum*) – such as the German experience with concentration camps and racial anthropological experiments during the military mass murdering of the Herero tribes in Namibia in South-West Africa in the first decade of the 20th century (Olusoga & Erichson, 2010; Langbehn & Salama, 2011) – it imported the colonial experience to the European continent.

Thus the message of the *Höcker Album* seems to be the Aryan 'white man's burden' of health and purity, in other words modernity – modernity in which in analogy to the garden, nature is purged of ambivalence, mixture, chaos, wildness and decadence by rational ordering, weeding and selection (Bauman, 1989; Van der Laarse, 1998, 1-14; Semelin, 2005). As is well known, men like Höss liked order and regularity not only in the form of military rules or the schedules of transports, but also in the camp commander's private gardens kept up by camp prisoners as pastoral arcadia with beautiful flower beds (Broszat, 1963).

In fact, Nazism not only resembled the racial practice of a botanist, it was a form of botany. So Himmler in 1937 proclaimed that all SS-territories should be transformed into 'a paradise for nature and birds' (as quoted in Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2001, 298). In Dachau he had already put out storks and experimented with bee-keeping and the cultivation of homeopathic herbs. Hitler, Hess, Rosenberg and Himmler were also ardent vegetarians, anti-urbanists, and anti-vivisectionists. Their racism was filled with biological metaphors, and their distaste of exotic, foreign species – trees, plants and animals – was closely related to their revulsion of *volksfeindliche*, uprooted races like Jews and gypsies. Endangering the purity of Aryan blood, these

Fremdkörper should be removed forever from German soil. Thus the Nazis cleansed German society of dirt and vermin in the same way as botanists and ecologists cleansed the German landscape. Hence, like vermin, the status of a human alien was even far below that of an animal, for according to Heinrich Himmler who, like many swastika occultists, felt attracted to Buddhism, every animal did have a right to live. While furiously opposing an SS *Sonderkommando*'s proposal for a hunting party in Poland in October 1941, however, two weeks later the Buddhist SS *Reichsführer* did not even want to discuss for a minute the necessity of the elimination of the Jewish 'lice' of Rostock, which was 'simply a question of purity' (as quoted in Padfield, 1990, 351-353).

Making *Heimatscapes*

Shortly after the German invasion in Poland, when Hitler appointed Himmler as *Reichskommissar für Festigung deutschen Volkstums* to strengthen the German race by a *völkische Neuordnung* (ethnic reorganization) of the newly incorporated territories in the East, Himmler attracted the Berlin geographer Konrad Meyer as head of his planning office. Together with his Berlin colleague, the landscape architect Heinrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, SS *Oberführer* professor Meyer and his team started to work in 1940 at the Berlin institute of *Agriculture* on the redevelopment of occupied West-Poland – renamed *Reichsgau Wartheland*. They worked according to the geopolitical principle of German *Raumforschung* on the implementation of the political principle of *Heim ins Reich* (Home in the Empire): the population transfer of Germans from the Soviet Baltics and Bessarabia to Nazi Germany ordered by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pakt (1939). Prepared in secret, Himmler's Berlin scholars developed in July 1941 a first draft of the SS *Generalplan Ost* to be finished with Himmler's consent a year later (Meyer, 1942a, and compare Rössler and Schleiermacher, 1993; Burchard, 1997; Haar, 2005; Heinemann *et al.*, 2006). Meyer's master plan offered the tools for an implementation of the SS policy of the *Ostsiedlung* (the colonization of Poland) by means of planned 'Germanization', or 're-Germanization' in the eyes of the Germans. Scale models of Germanized Warthegau had already been shown by Meyer to Nazi leaders at the Berlin exhibition *Planung und Aufbau im Osten* of March 1941, which was accompanied a year later by a scientific catalogue edited by Himmler. The aim of Master Plan East was, according to Meyer's preface of *Planung und Aufbau*, the *Eindeutschung*

Figure 15.3 Exhibition *Planung und Aufbau im Osten*, Berlin 1941

der neuen Gebiete, um die Ordnung, Gestaltung und Entfaltung von Raum und Landschaft als künftige Heimat deutscher Menschen (Meyer, 1942b, 3).

This racial policy of landscape cleansing culminated in Himmler's *Allgemeine Anordnung [...] über die Gestaltung der Landschaft in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten* (General Alignment for Landscape Development in the Occupied Territories in the East) of December 1942. It was intended as an extrapolation of Meyer's Master Plan East to the occupied territories in Russia. During the massive German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, Himmler had already proclaimed two other annexed territories next to Warthegau, namely Ostland (the Baltics and North-West Russia) and Gotengau (Belorussia, Ukraine and Crimea). Like the occupations of Norway and the Netherlands (Westland), which likewise were culturally supervised by Himmler because of their expected incorporation in a greater pan-Germanic *Reich* (Hausmann, 2005, 215), these Eastern occupations were justified by archaeological and anthropological Nazi expeditions. They were headed by scholars such as Germany's leading archaeologist Herbert Jankuhn, who tried to prove the existence in antiquity of some Scythian and Gothic tribes as ancestors of the Nordic, Germanic culture, with the help of artefacts looted by SS roving and killing units from local museums

(Heinemann, 2003, 361; Pringle, 2006, 218). Though searching in vain up to 1943 with his Kiel colleague Karl Kersten and the Dutch director of the National Service for Archaeological Heritage F.C. Bursch for the remnants of an old Gothic capital with a mighty palace that would resemble the glory of Rome, Jankuhn envisioned Gotengau as the historic Teutonic homeland where German man would return in a newly made landscape that would look 'something like that of Schleswig-Holstein' (as quoted in Pringle, 2006, 220, and compare Eickhoff, 2003, 259, 266-9).

Like Auschwitz and other newly developed industrial cities in the incorporated eastern territories the Polish countryside would equally be developed by means of the Nazi camp system with slave labour. Yet, far from industrial this would come to look like a 'healthy German landscape' in which Aryan settlers would live in harmony with nature in accord with *deutscher Wesensart* (German Identity). These heritagescapes would consist of newly developed small towns (*Heimstätten*), German villages with graveyards and a *Thingplatz* (for outdoor festivities), 'soldier farms' (*Wehrbauernhöfe*), Saxon 'manor houses' rewarded to SS leaders, and Nordic woods and Celtic fields with hedgerows (Gröning & Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1987; Staudenmeier, 1995).

As Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn notices, Himmler's love of nature and landscape patriotism derived from a 19th-century romantic tradition that was being radicalized after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 by a process of imperial nation-building. Like many other European countries, Germany shaped its national culture at the same time by an ideological 'nationalization of the masses' as well as by a 'nationalization of nature' (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1997, 190, and compare Mosse, 1975; Lip, 1987, 264). However, more than anywhere else the romantic notion of a sacred bond of people, land and nation was used in Wilhelminian Germany as a political tool for purifying the nation's soil and culture from 'artificial' Italian and French cultural traces. Thus the influential German landscape architect Willy Lange politicized the romantic Anglo-style *Gartenkunst* to become a 'truly German landscape style'. Praising the sublime and picturesque beauty of the German Rhine, the age-old oak woods, and the Saxon dolmen landscape, his patriot love for Germany was directly related to a mythic belief in the purity of Nordic nature. Lange, praised up to the present as the founder of German natural gardening, had already in *Gartengestaltung der Neuzeit* (1907) introduced the term ecology for his *Blut und Boden* theory of a genetically based relationship of Germans to natural landscapes; an age-old habitat of which the preservation was considered to be a precondition for racial health and purity (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1999). Arranged with megalith graves

and invented memorial monuments, these *Wehrlandschaften* (occupation-scapes) fortified with *Ewigkeitswerten* (eternal values), could, according to Wiepking and others, only be fathomed by Germans (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2003; Brands, 2001, 245-247). After the Great War of 1914-1918, this ecological racism became related to a longing for the reconstruction of Nordic primeval nature. Thus by reproducing ancient German forests, farms and defences, Germans would experience a sort of homecoming in their natural *Heimat*.

Himmler, convinced of the ecological superiority of this *Nordische Gartenkunst*, even ordered his *SS Ahnenerbe*, the Nazi branch organization for archaeologists, anthropologists and racial scientists searching for the roots of Aryan culture, to found a research institute on plant genetics in Graz in Austria. Alongside the *Süddeutschen Institute of Volkswissenschaften* it was preparing an ethnic cleansing in Carinthia and Slovenia based on scenarios of spatial planning and population transfers (Wedekind, 2005, 113). Scientists experimented there with 'Aryan' grains derived from Ernst Schäfer's 1938/39 SS Tibet expedition, which was documented in the popular movie *Geheimnis Tibet* (1943). One of its members, the anthropologist Bruno Beger, applied his experience with racial measurements on a selected group of 89 Jews and some Poles, Roma, and Asians from Auschwitz in the Alsatian KZ camp Natzweiler in 1943. After their gassing the dead bodies were for decades preserved in Strasbourg University, waiting in vain to be skinned for *Ahnenerbe*'s skeleton collection (Hale, 2003; Prindle, 2006, 257-267).

This modern belief in makeability was crucial to the establishment of an official landscape policy in Nazi Germany that culminated in an essentialist and totalitarian 'naturalization of the nation', combining blood and soil, landscape and heritage into the utopian idea of a Teutonic *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1997, 195-199). The principles of this *Heimat* phenomenology were in the 1930s propagated and practised by *völkisch* organizations such as the anti-Semite *Tannenberg Bundes* (later *Das Deutschvolk*) and the *Volksbund (Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge)* (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1997, 201; Brands, 2001, 238-241, 254-255; Fuhrmeister, 2007). Far removed from the cities at the empty German heaths they established graveyards and memorials of fallen soldiers. These shattered sites would become the breeding ground for the natural and national materialization of Nazi Germany's racial landscape philosophy.

Opposing Christian crosses, the Nazis rooted their 'naturalist' ideology far beyond Christianity in the deepest layers of Germany's soil. Purged from *Fremdkörper* only 'native trees like oak, lime, birch, ash, yew, juniper, and other evergreen coniferous species were good enough for this reinvented Teutonic memorial architecture, whereas monuments had to be constructed

Figure 15.4 Sachsenhain



of native natural stones, preferably boulders with engravings of prehistoric runes and swastikas' (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1997, 207-208, 218). This racial botanic ban on alien species was so severe that even roses were banished from the mythical German woods (Brands, 2001, 228-229; Schama, 1995, 75-134). For only Nordic materials would give a worthy, patriot expression to the honour of the ancestors, the German race, and the love of nature.

This Teutonic death cult reached its height at Sachsenhain or Saxon's Grove, designed by the influential landscape architect Wilhelm Hübotter in 1934 under the authority of Himmler's *Ahnenerbe* and Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg. What today seems an innocent natural walkway was in fact a first and highly successful proof of an authentic national-socialist memorial site, erected by Hübotter on land of his own (Agte, 2001; Brands, 2001, 222; Gröning, 2002, 130). This still existing memorial landscape commemorates the mythical 4500 victims of Charles the Great's massacre of the fierce, rebellious Saxons who refused to be converted to Christianity, at the border of the river Aller in 782. This forgotten catastrophe was brought back in Germany's memorial landscape (for landscaping was crucial to German memory culture) by means of the layout of a two-km-long, wooded bypass, lined by 4500 boulders and leading to a parade ground in the middle of the German woods.

From 1942 Hübötter was closely associated with Wiepking's and Meyer's SS Masterplan East, and consequently with the design and landscaping of Himmler's Polish concentration camps (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 1997, 218). The *Reichsführer's* policy for a *Heim ins Reich* was sketched aptly in films and novels like Karl Götz's *Die grosse Heimkehr* (1941) as a homecoming in the former Eastern territories of the Teutonic knights. Polish towns like Posen (Poznan), Lods or Litzmannstadt (Łódź) and Auschwitz (Oświęcim) were transformed 'again' into German cities, and whole territories were vacated for the benefit of 'returning' *Volkdeutschen*, 'coming home' mostly from the Baltics, but also from Danish Jutland and the occupied Netherlands where German leaders expected (wrongly) that a third of the *germanisch-niederdeutsche* population could be recruited for the *Osteinsetz* (Bosma, 1993). Thus Götz's novel was published in translation, a Dutch 'Eastern Company' was erased, and Dutch SS-volunteers for the Eastern Front were rewarded with farms and goods of the expelled population of the anti-Bolshevik frontier zones Ostland and Ukraine.

As we saw, the Nazis legitimated their *Lebensraum* policy in the eastern occupied territories as a return after 600 years to their lost *Heimat*, while actually inventing new *Heimatscapes* 'in der sich der deutsche Mensch heimisch fühlt und in der er wirklich bodenständig werden kann' (quoted in Rössler, 1990, 181-182). Their eastern paradise of blood and soil, however, became a hell for Jews and Poles (Dwork & Van Pelt, 1996, 127-159). Nazi Germanization policy had therefore nothing to do with old fashioned Habsburg Germanization, as Himmler stated clearly in 1942: '*Unsere Aufgabe ist es, den Osten nicht im alten Sinne zu germanisieren*', which means in the old way of supporting the assimilation of existing Slavic populations in German language and culture, but to guarantee that '*im Osten nur Menschen wirklich deutschen, germanischen Blutes wohnen*' (Himmler, 1942). Because of the implicit denying of the historical rights of the inferior inhabitants of the occupied territories, who had to yield to a superior race, spatial and ethnic cleansing were from the start completely intertwined. Except for those regarded racially healthy as proved by anthropological measurements, German occupation in the East would subsequently implicate a complete elimination of Jews, Slavs and other 'racially unwanted' people, the enslaving of inferior Poles, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians, and a spatial wiping out of all non-Gothic traces.

Tragically, this Nazi racial/spatial occupation policy created a transmittable model with much staying power. For, whereas the Netherlands after a long public debate abstained from their initial reparation plan of an annexation of Germany's western borderlands (Bosma, 1993, 212-213), the Poles were not inclined towards giving up their claims on Germany's eastern

territories. In fact, they were in 1945 convinced (as the German supporters of Heim im Reich in 1939) of the 'historical justice' of their homecoming in the annexed territory of Eastern Prussia, which was mythologized as the 10th-century Piast Poland and thoroughly Polonized (Meng, 2011, 131). Although this Polish *myśl zachodnia* (Western thought) was rooted as much as the German *Ostforschung* in 19th century romantic nationalism, it appealed strongly to new 'Jagiellonian' and 'Piast' intellectuals wanting to counter Nazism with comparable means (Piskorski, 2005). Yet even far outside the spatial borders of the Holocaust the other victims of Nazism have adopted comparable spatial cleansing politics. Thus legitimizing a Zionist mapping of Palestine by historical claims on the Holy Land, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank is likewise supported by archaeological excavations and state of the art exhibition techniques (such as currently digital 3D landscape visualizations of Hebrew Israel), even though the Holocaust paradigm might also offer enough space for criticizing the creation of a new people without space (Mitchell, 2002; Weizman, 2007; Van der Laarse, 2010b).

Hidden Continuities: From Camps to Memorial Spaces

Strangely, after the defeat of Nazi Germany the idea that art, landscape and architecture were innocent, has become prevalent in and outside post-war Germany. Only Hitler's authorship was questioned. Although German culture was permeated with *Blut und Boden* eco-fascism, and the national-socialist following was nowhere so plentiful as among the *Natur- und Denkmalschutz* movement, no one asked for a denazification of these organizations, and no one questioned the aesthetical and scientific premises of Germany's preservationists (Gröning, 2004). Moreover, Nazi-Germany's leading architects would not only become founders of Germany's post-war spatial planning policy, but *also* of its post-war Holocaust memorial culture.

This continuity is directly approvable at Bergen-Belsen. Started as a detention camp for political prisoners and Russian war captives, this Saxon prisoner-of-war camp was taken over by the SS in 1943 for use as a Jewish concentration camp. Although not designed as an extermination camp, due to its rapid expansion because of the death marches from Auschwitz-Birkenau during the first months of 1945, more than half of the 60,000 Jewish inmates died of typhus and malnutrition. Hundreds of photos testify of the horror of dead bodies all over the camp area at its liberation. Yet after the British burned all the remnants to prevent the spread of diseases, nothing was left except a bare plain with bulldozed mass graves (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2001).

Figure 15.5 Hübötter, blueprint 1946



Nonetheless, Bergen-Belsen was not completely forgotten. Immediately after the clearing of the camp, the British military government forced Saxony's provincial administration to erect 'an appropriate memorial'. This would lead to the so-called Obelisk and the Inscription Wall (1947). But Major-General Button also ordered 'to prepare plans for the fencing of the mounds [and] for the setting of a suitable garden to embellish the sites' (as quoted in Staats, 2008, 185). This work was only finished after the closing of the British Displaced Persons camp, where thousands of stateless Jews had been waiting up to 1952 for their emigration to the United States and Israel.

Remarkably, though, in spite of Jewish protests, the regional Saxon authorities attracted Himmler's leading architect Hübötter, the creator of Sachsenhausen, for the planning of Bergen-Belsen's memorial landscape (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2001). In several sketches he aimed at a complete transformation of the former camp area, by then officially recognized as Europe's greatest Jewish graveyard, into a pastoral landscape park. Although Hübötter had to stop his work in 1946 because of Jewish criticism of his attitude to Nazi Germany (and because of his own discord about the involvement of Jewish survivors in the design process), the result six years later showed a close resemblance to his original plan.

Hübötter himself seemed to have been well aware of the challenge offered by this unique commission for Germany's greatest national war memorial. He even corrected the borders of the camp area for a better use as a memorial space that would stimulate a sublime experience of *vanitas* among visitors, and staged the mass graves as a sort of prehistoric burial mounds, covered with Saxon heath. For Hübötter, who spoke literally of the Bergen-Belsen monument as 'a sensation' (as cited in Fibisch, 1999, 140), it was foremost a second Sachsenhain, memorializing another genocide of unparalleled proportion by means of nature and stones.

Thus Bergen-Belsen's redesign as a memorial camp cannot be explained exclusively by the need for a site of mourning among its survivors. From the very beginning the unique development from a concentration camp into a memoryscape represented a specific German idea of Nordic landscaping, according to the rules of Lange and Wiepking as prescribed in the Nazi *Handbuch für Friedhofsgärtner* of 1940. One could even claim that in the late 1940s, Hübötter realized at Bergen-Belsen Himmler's wish of a decade earlier to wipe out the traces of mass destruction by transforming SS camp areas after the Final Solution into natural resorts. Using exclusively native plants, heath, trees (a lot of oak) and natural stone, its staging and texture was, in other words, based on the principles of 'landscape architecture swastika' (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2001, 288).

Probably, this Germanizing of the Bergen-Belsen memorial explains also why German public opinion, in spite of strong opposition at the opening ceremony in 1952 against the propagated Nuremberg idea of collective guilt, was prepared to accept its existence as a national symbol of the German catastrophe. Nonetheless, as a *Fremdkörper* with thousands of dead bodies of mostly foreign Jews and Russians, Bergen-Belsen soon became a symbol of silence – an unwanted thorn in Germany's revived national consciousness in the restoration-period (Staats, 2008). Until Ronald Reagan's controversial visit to the German military cemetery Bitburg and Bergen-Belsen in 1985, the memorial camp was almost forgotten. Although Europe's largest Jewish graveyard, Bergen-Belsen at that time was chiefly appropriated by British soldiers as a sort of veteran heritage, and remembered only by a small group of former political prisoners and Jewish survivors (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2001, 276; Young, 1993, 49).

Did we too easily believe the myth of the unpolitical professional, as propagated by Adolf Speer and other 'gentle' planners? Up to the end of Nazism these *Fachleute* had never been opposed to Hitlerism. Most of them were strong believers in the eternal power of Nazi memorials and monuments, which according to Hitler as *Worte aus Stein* would speak to

future generations until long after the fall of the Third Reich (as quoted in Weihsmann, 1998, 19; and compare MacDonald, 2006). This goes not only for fascists like Meyer, Wiepking and Hübötter but also for a former socialist like Walter Christaller, who switched to the Nazi party in 1940 when summoned by Meyer to his Berlin SS Planning office for the occupied territories for the applying of his Central Place Theory (1933), which was considered an application of the *Führerprinzip im Raumordnung*. As planning was the essence of national socialism, as it was for Stalinist communism, Himmler's *Ostkolonisation* was a challenge to test his theories under the unique conditions of a Blitzkrieg (Rössler, 1989; Aly & Heim, 2004 [1991], 156-159). Nonetheless, the so-called 'Christaller model' was also pragmatically applied by the Netherlands Service for Spatial Planning in the newly reclaimed Noordoostpolder after 1942, which therefore has been described as a *Westkolonisation* (Bosma, 1993, 203-12). Yet even considering the gap between the utopian visions and technocratic practices of Himmler's Berlin academics and the brutal murdering by the SS *Sonderkommandos* at the local level, the conclusion must be that there would have been no Holocaust in the eastern territories without these armchair planners (Browning, 2007, 240-24, 325).

Though according to one of Himmler's biographers, Meyer and Heydrich represented the intertwined positive and negative side of the SS policy of ethnic cleansing, it was Meyer's planning office that transformed Himmler's agrarian utopianism into 'hard' geopolitics. In addition, Meyer as head of the SS Planning Service was also directly involved in Heydrich's Final Solution policy when summoned by Himmler on his inspection to the Baltics to increase the pace of the Jewish destruction (Breitman, 2005, 232, 286-289). Yet Meyer was only sentenced at the Nuremberg Trials for his SS leadership position and not for war crime, due to Hübötter's, Christaller's and Wiepking's 'whitewash-papers' that stresses his '*ausgesprochene Friedensarbeit*' (as quoted in Gutschow, 2001, 185). Accepting their statements that Meyer's Master Plan East would have consisted only of purely theoretical *Wunschbildplanungen* (utopian plans), no one at that time was able to comprehend the dimension of the involvement of Himmler's scholars in the Holocaust.

Yet, the awareness of the ideological character of Germany's agricultural and landscape policy dated not only from the 1960s, but existed already in the Weimar Republic when the Jewish socialist landscape planner Georg Pniower strongly opposed Wiepking's demand for a 'nordification' of German landscape architecture, which according to him would result in a bizarre throwback to the Ice Age. Interestingly, whereas Wiepking

after Hitler's rise to power took over with Meyer's support the chair of Erwin Barth, the main representative of the leftist German people's park movement who committed suicide in 1933, it was Pniower who took over in 1951 Wiepking's Berlin chair of landscape architecture in the Russian war zone. Thus, during the Cold War the old rivalry continued when in the 1950s Wiepking, Meyer and Hübötter were appointed in the western zone as professors at the new department of planning and landscape architecture at the Technical University Hannover. In addition, former Nazi ideologist Gustave Alinger was appointed as the new chair of Agriculture at the Technical University in West-Berlin, SS archaeologist Schäfer became curator of the *Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum*, and Jankuhn finished his career as a respected dean of Göttingen's philosophy department (Gröning, 2002, 130). Only Christaller opted for a position of independent scholar after switching from the Nazi party to the Communist party in 1945 and later to the Social Democrats. Yet his central place model was up to the 1960s the paradigm for spatial planning in Western Germany under the command of his friend Emil Meynen, who from 1941 to 1943 had directed the racial 'mapping' of Russia in the interest of the SS and *Wehrmacht* cleansing operations.

Actively involved in the landscaping of the *Bundesautobahnen*, the reconstruction of bombed cities and German landscape planning, Hübötter and others stuck not only to their Teutonic principles – packaged now in a 'western' functional technocratic idiom, but also remained loyal to their fascist comrades. Thus Auschwitz's former landscape architect Max Fischer graduated in 1951 by the designer of Sachsenhain and Bergen-Belsen on Auschwitz's *Grünplanung*, while Auschwitz's city planner Max Fischer was appointed in the same position in Hannover (Gutschow, 2001, 188-189). A remarkable irony of German 20th century history was also that the same historians who contributed with their *Ostforschung* to the Nazi deportations of Poles and Jews, like Theodor Schieder, were after 1945 researching the deportations of German *Heimatvertriebenen* from East-Central Europe at the command of the West-German authorities (Haar, 2005). A 'return to normalcy' as it was called in the case of Meynen's colleague Leibbrandt, who after being actively involved in mass killings in Ukraine, during the Cold War exchanged his racial anti-Slavism for western anti-Communism (Schmaltz & Sinner, 2005, 53).

Now, if nature and architecture are – like Hitler's art – not that innocent and unpolluted by political ideologies, wouldn't this mean that Germany's familiar Nordic landscapes could easily become an unwanted heritage in the context of the painful process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*? Far from the success story made of it later, it was in many ways an *Erbgut* changed

into an *Erblast*. Thus Berlin and Hannover scholars have only during the last decades critically rejected their predecessors' blood-and-soil essentialism, while the Berlin Humboldt University has in 2002 officially recognized its responsibility for Himmler's planning office for *Generalplan Ost* (Erklärungen, 2002). So, I think the uncomfortable conclusion of all of this is that when it comes to landscape, the rupture between Nazism and Democracy was not as great as has often been thought. Or to put it differently, the post-war continuity of Hitler's taste was at least as problematic as that of 'Hitler's elites' (Frei, 2004).

Through the Eyes of the Perpetrators?

Thus we may wonder: do the camps still speak? Up to the 1970s, not only in Germany and Poland but also in the Netherlands, Austria, France and elsewhere, most former camps had disappeared or become isolated, forgotten places (Van Vree & Van der Laarse, 2009). Of the approximately 9000 to 15,000 – 20,000 (depending on the criteria used) Nazi camps in occupied Europe from British Alderney to Belorussia (including 24 main camps with a total of 1000 subcamps), only ten of them are transformed after the war – and mostly only after 1989 – into memory sites (Milton, 2001, 268; Benz & Distel, 2005, 7-12). Yet even this process of monumentalization would not end the stripping of authentic remnants such as barracks and crematoria. They basically came to share a certain Holocaust texture of memory (Young, 1993; Van Vree, 1995; Hijink, 2011) though this staging of memorial places should not be understood only in the context of the post-1989 Holocaust memory boom, but also in that of the pre-war German Totenkult (Mosse, 1990; Koselleck & Jeismann, 1994).

The influence of the German landscape design tradition is even recognizable at Treblinka, where the camp area is transformed from a 'non-place' into a penetrating memorial with the famous memorial monument of 1959-1964, designed in granite by the Polish sculptor Adam Haupt and the architect Franciszek Dusenko. By its dimensions, naturalness, isolation and the choice of 17,000 boulders with inscriptions, symbolizing the vanished Jewish *shtetls*, accompanied by a symbolic railway, the 'Stones of Treblinka' are generally held as one of the most impressive statements of the heritage of loss (Young, 1993, 185-92; Van Vree, 2006). Nonetheless, the similarity with Sachsenhain is too obvious to attach much value to the statement of the designers that their much copied idea of memorial stones was derived from a Jewish burial tradition.

Because of its early musualization Bergen-Belsen in particular attracted much attention from camp designers, such as in the case of the former Dutch transit camp Westerbork. No remnants of barracks or crematoria were left here after the destruction of the camp around 1970, which was at that time in use under the name of Schattenberg as a dwelling place for Moluccan immigrants from the former Dutch Indies. After being demolished the camp area changed into a sort of natural park, owned by the State's Forestry Service, though signified as a memorial by Ralph Prince's Westerbork monument symbolizing the transports by a broken railway. Although still an empty, pastoral space, critics spoke about the danger of Disneyfication after Westerbork's campsite was redesigned in 1992 with symbolic mounds at the location of the foundations of some lost barracks, a stone railroad track like in Treblinka, and other symbolic Holocaust art, such as the 102,000 stones symbolizing the Dutch-Jewish victims of the Holocaust put on transport to Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and Sobibor (Mulder, 1993; Van der Laarse, 2010a).

It may seem a somewhat awkward metaphor in the context of what happened in such memorial spaces, but one could state that the incorporation of the camps into Europe's national landscapes of memory was only possible after a new phase of spatial cleansing. For after the Nazi *Ordnungswahn* most Holocaust memorials share a sort of symbolic emptiness, as referring to loss and absence (Van der Laarse, 2011). In contrast to the horrifying images of the camps made by allied photographers, the evocation of the past by the use of authentic buildings and story-making was in Bergen-Belsen, Westerbork and elsewhere for long opposed by authorities and Jewish interest groups. Only by what Marcuse has described for Dachau from the late 1960s as a symbolic repossession by the victims of Nazism, these former terrortscapes would soon become 'victims of tourism' (Marcuse 2001, and compare Naeff 2014). Yet one could argue that exactly because of this, these 'perilous places' could be transformed into national mnemonic spaces (Milton, 2001, 257-258). And this was happening not only in the West but also in the East, as might be indicated by the impressive war and camp memorials of Bogdan Bogdanovic in Tito Yugoslavia, such as his Jasenovac monument (1966) and the Dudik memorial park in Vukovar (1978) (Van der Laarse, 2013b; Baillie 2013). Thus the loss of 'guilty' architecture sacralized the camps as memorial parks that offered survivors a possibility for reconciliation, based on the false assumption that art and nature are innocent.

Yet the post-1989 memory boom also witnessed a growing unease with this rustic staging of Holocaust memorials. Not only authentic places but also symbolic monuments have been questioned because of their pastoral texture. Thus the Hyde Park Holocaust memorial stone in London of 1993,

which is placed in the same way as Bergen-Belsen's obelisk as a monument in a 'beautiful garden setting', provoked protest against its 'disgusting' and 'unworthy' natural setting. For how could one appreciate a huge megalith boulder with the inscription 'Holocaust Memorial Park' in the knowledge that this picturesque image should commemorate the dark hole of modern history? (Cooke, 2000). 'An ironic perversion of the idea of the pastorate', as James Young judges in the case of a comparable Holocaust Memorial in San Francisco (Young, 1993, 311-318).

'Following in the Footsteps of the Perpetrators' is the name of a 21st-century tour in Buchenwald (Azaryahu, 2003), while the webpage makers of LeedsWIKI are following Karl Höcker's photo album by looking through the eyes of the men and women named Nazi guards (2010), and at Westerbork's camp site the only authentic remnant left, the camp commander's villa is turned in 2015 into a new museum space that offers visitors the experience of looking at the camp through the eyes of SS *Obersturmführer* Albert Gemmeker, whose main hobby was as one could expect: gardening. This growing interest in 'authorship' no longer identifies only with victims, but might also be offering challenging 'hot' interpretations (Uzzel & Ballentyne, 1998) of perpetrator's perspectives, which may help us to become aware

Figure 15.6 English Holocaust memorial in London Hyde Park



of the fatal attraction of our Holocaust heritagescapes, so closely akin to Nazi landscapes.

At this point the Chapman brothers' terrifying hell of Nazism will not bring us any further in explaining the fatal attraction of Hitler's art and Himmler's nature (Van der Laarse, 2009). For not only the camps were ideologically authored, so are these postwar 'guilty landscapes' – an anthropomorphism coined by the Dutch artist Armando to reframe the woods nearby the former camp site of his hometown Amersfoort (Armando *et al.*, 1980). Probably nothing evokes this 'unwanted beauty' of Holocaust representation (Kaplan, 2007) more than the 'Teutonic' art works of Anselm Kiefer and Joseph Beuys. Their *Hermanns-Slacht* (1977) and *Seven Thousand Oaks* (1984) provoked the British-Jewish admirer with Lithuanian roots Simon Schama to ask how much of this poetic *Waldsterben* we can afford without being tempted by moral blindness? (Schama, 1995, 134-149). Put otherwise, these 'anti-fascist, fascist landscapes' confront us with the uncomfortable possibility that Nazism still 'speaks'. Reframing the blood and soil metaphor in a new notion of the perpetrator's absence, these mystical, organic, decaying images composed of oaks and boulders mask the horrible sublime behind the fatal attraction of the innocent picturesque. For behind our nostalgic gaze upon historical landscapes lurk the traumascapes of modern society.

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